

From: Walt Birdsall
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

From 1979 to 1982, the Federal government squandered millions of taxpayer money trying to destroy one of the finest companies the American industrial genius has ever produced: International Business Machines, commonly known as IBM. With its reputation for boat-anchor reliable hardware and its legendary and meticulous obsession with customer service, IBM was the standard by which all other computer companies were measured.

At the last minute, the Feds broke up the phone company. Today, our computers are world-class and our patchwork quilt phone system is on par with Afghanistan.

The Federal government is now trying to destroy Microsoft, probably using the same legal blunderbusses, the same hapless but deep-pocketed taxpayers, and for the same misguided reasons: it's too big, it's a monopoly, they make too much money, stifle competition... et cetera, et cetera.

Do you folks not learn from past screw-ups?

As a professional software engineer, let me explain Windows to you. Windows is typing. Nothing else is involved. No natural resources were consumed, no wildlife was endangered, no wetlands were compromised, and no child labor laws were violated (although I've known some pretty immature teckies in my day!) A bunch of ill clad, anti-social, frequently unwashed engineers of dubious morals and execrable personal habits, gather in consort... and they type.

And the public buys it. If you don't like it, don't buy it. Are you with me?

A few years ago, some twit at the Department of Justice crowed about having created a "level playing field" with respect to Microsoft. (Sports metaphors are very much in vogue at the DOJ.)

The next day there was great rejoicing in the streets of Bonn, New Delhi, Tokyo, Taipei, and London. They just *love* level playing fields!

It is the nature of the computer business that one company must dominate and set the standards that define the industry. Previously, that company was IBM; today, it is Microsoft. If you damage Microsoft, you will foment an unimaginable Tower of Babel chaos. Do you have any idea of the trillions of dollars of American wealth that have been created and leveraged by Microsoft's craftsmanship? Where would Mike Dell be? Intel? Seagate, Maxtor, and Western Digital, if there were no Windows? How many printers do you think HP would sell if there were no PCs to plug into? The Internet would revert to what it once was: an academic play-toy.

Someday, the natural evolutionary forces of technology will cause Microsoft to be set aside into an honored, hallowed place in industrial fossil history, and to a well-deserved rest. My teckkie brethren and I will then create a new enterprise.

Sadly, no one in government has any understanding in this arena except to meddle and create unimaginable mischief.

Please do us all a favor and just go away.

Walt Birdsall
Retired software engineer